Mayors' Institute on City Design

Spring 2005 Newsletter

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MICD Inspires
New Program Aimed at Wiser School Building

By Ron Bogle, President and CEO, American Architectural Foundation

Ron Bogle

Great Schools by Design informs school and community leaders about leading edge thinking in school design and creates a national forum for the major stakeholders in school design to think creatively about the larger issues affecting the design and construction of schools.

MICD partners – National Endowment for the Arts, American Architectural Foundation and U.S. Conference of Mayors – announced that a special Mayors' Institute on School Design is set for May.

The first School Design Institute, modeled after the Mayors' Institute on City Design, is an important part of the American Architectural Foundation's new national school design initiative, Great Schools by Design. The program was created in response to the growing recognition that mayors and school leaders are seeking more constructive ways to invest the almost $29 billion being spent annually in the U.S. on school construction and renovation.

Founding co-sponsors for Great Schools by Design are McGraw Hill Construction and Herman Miller Inc. Its first School Design Institute will be held in Washington, D.C., May 4-6, when a small team of professionals joins with leaders of four school districts and their mayors to analyze specific design challenges faced by the educators in hopes of transforming the way public schools are planned, designed and integrated with their communities.

Great Schools by Design informs school and community leaders about leading edge thinking in school design and creates a national forum for the major stakeholders in school design to think creatively about the larger issues affecting the design and construction of schools. Great Schools by Design addresses the challenges faced by cities as a result of the deteriorating condition of public schools and the need for new schools.

Response to Great Schools by Design has been enthusiastic. Already, the initiative has been featured in more than 100 publications, including two articles by the National School Boards Association (NSBA), which were distributed to more than 12,000 school board members and superintendents. Presentations have been made to more than a dozen audiences, and in partnership with KnowledgeWorks Foundation, AAF is now developing a series of documentaries featuring best practices in school design. The first of these will premier at the 2005 NSBA national convention in San Diego and will spotlight John A. Johnson Achievement Plus Elementary School in St. Paul (Ankeny Kell Architects).

Also in partnership with KnowledgeWorks Foundation, American Institute of Architects and 22 other associates, AAF is planning a national summit on school design to be held this summer. This event, which will involve all stakeholders, will identify how to improve school design.

With the U.S. spending $29 billion each year to renovate and build urban schools, and with the need rising, it is clear from the response to Great Schools by Design that AAF has answered a compelling need. New York City alone estimates that at least $15 billion is needed to restore its 1,200 school buildings. In addition to fixing outdated and dilapidated schools, 6,000 new facilities must be built nationwide in the next decade simply to keep pace with population growth.

Since kicking off Great Schools by Design in March, 2004, AAF has organized and facilitated a series of forums to stimulate discussions on the critical issues in school design, obtaining the counsel of superintendents, school board members, architects, interior designers, teachers, parents and community leaders. These forums have been key to gathering information and opinions that shed light on perceptions and practices of these key stakeholders.

To understand better the challenges facing local leaders, AAF has engaged mayors, superintendents, and community and school leaders in Boston, Dallas, Oklahoma City, Los Angeles, Cleveland, Akron, Seattle, Denver, New York, Miami, Washington, DC, Las Vegas, Charlottesville, Minneapolis, Honolulu and Indianapolis.

This spring, AAF will publish a series of white papers and articles highlighting the lessons of the forum series and report on the program's findings. Meanwhile, additional forums are planned in the coming year.

The strength of Great Schools by Design is in the strength of its partners, which include:

- The American Institute of Architects: Committee on Architecture for Education
- The National School Boards Association
- The American Association of School Administrators
- KnowledgeWorks Foundation
- U.S. Conference of Mayors
- Cisco Systems
- The Council for Educational Facilities Planning International
- The National Trust for Historic Preservation
- The National Endowment for the Arts
- The Council for Great City Schools
- The National Education Association
- National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities

To reserve a copy of Great Schools by Design: A Progress Report, contact AAF's Outreach and Development Department at info@archfoundation.org.

New Advisory Council Expands Influence of Mayors' Institute

"We need the involvement of the best minds in the U.S. working on cities from a variety of perspectives as we shape the work of the Institute. With these members, that is exactly what we have."

An impressive group of 21 nationally-known leaders on urban design issues has agreed to serve on the newly-created National Advisory Council of the Mayors' Institute of City Design.

"The creation of the National Advisory Council is a milestone for the Mayors' Institute as we think of ways to expand the influence and effectiveness of the organization," said Mayors' Institute Executive Director Carol Coletta. "We need the involvement of the best minds in the U.S. working on cities from a variety of perspectives as we shape the work of the Institute. With these members, that is exactly what we have."

Named to the Advisory Council are:

- **Joan Abramson**, president, Jefferson Institute
- **Fred Carl**, founder, chairman, president and CEO, Viking Range Corporation
- **Adele Chatfield-Taylor**, president, American Academy in Rome
- **Manuel Diaz**, mayor, City of Miami
- **Mark Falcone**, managing director, Continuum Partners
- **Reese Fayde**, CEO, Living Cities
- **Richard Florida**, author, *The Rise of the Creative Class* and *The Flight of the Creative Class*
- **Robert Forbes Jr.**, founder and director, Design Within Reach
- **Shirley Franklin**, mayor, City of Atlanta
- **Harvey Gantt**, founder and partner, Gantt Huberman Architects
- **Kay Granger**, U. S. House of Representatives, 12th District of Texas
- **Michael Guido**, mayor, City of Dearborn
- **Robert Larson**, managing director and chairman, Lazard Freres Real Estate Investors, LLC
- **Richard Moe**, president, National Trust for Historic Preservation
- **F. Joseph Moravec**, commissioner, Public Buildings Services, U.S. General Services Administration
- **Robert Peck**, president, Greater Washington Board of Trade; representative, American Architectural Foundation Board of Regents
- **Daniel Pink**, author, *Free Agent Nation* and *A Whole New Mind*
- **Joseph Riley**, mayor, City of Charleston, SC
- **Jaquelin T. Robertson**, partner, Cooper Robertson
- **Craig Robins**, founder, Dacra
- **Peter Rummel**, chairman and CEO, The St. Joe Company

The members of the National Advisory Council were selected because of their demonstrated commitment to improving urban design and their belief in its ability to transform cities. They will help increase the impact of the program by helping staff boost resources, visibility and support for the Mayors' Institute.

"We are extraordinarily fortunate that people with these credentials will be lending their influence and sharing their knowledge to help us further the work of the Mayors' Institute," said Coletta. "It is recognition of the importance that design-conscious mayors can have on the future of their cities."

Recent Events

Event	Resource Team	Mayors and Design Issues
MICD: 35 **March 2-4, 2005** Charleston, SC South Carolina Aquarium	**Joe Cortright** *economist* **Julie Eizenberg** *architect* **Mark Falcone** *real estate executive* **Ray Huff** *architect* **Walter Kulash** *traffic engineer* **Margie Ruddick** *landscape architect* **Donovan Rypkema** *historic preservation specialist*	**Tom Barrett** *Milwaukee, WI* MacArthur Square is currently an unused public square located in front of the Milwaukee County Courthouse. This park space commands a prominent location in downtown Milwaukee, yet it is difficult to access due to freeway access tunnels and parking infrastructure. What steps should the City take to integrate this park with the rest of downtown? **Ardell Brede** *Rochester, MN* The City is working to strengthen its downtown so it will have street appeal, a sense of place, housing and retail. How does the City make downtown more pedestrian friendly, connect Mayo Clinic expansions to promote vibrancy and create an "urban village" along 1st Avenue? **David Cicilline** *Providence, RI* The City is seeking continued redevelopment of the property adjacent to the Providence River's edge. The City must determine appropriate uses and building types along the river, ways to create more activity and opportunities to integrate new development? **Mufi Hannemann** *Honolulu, HI* Honolulu's Chinatown is a vibrant downtown neighborhood featuring many restaurants and retail establishments. How does the City promote the arts and new development while preserving Chinatown's unique culture and history? **Pegeen Hanrahan** *Gainesville, FL* The City is focusing on the redevelopment of the Lincoln Estates neighborhood east of downtown and the University of Florida. How should the City work with developers to create new housing and rebuild a failed public housing project? **Pam Iorio** *Tampa, FL* The City is undergoing major development of its waterfront park, corresponding with the design of a new Tampa Museum of Art. How should the City proceed to use part of the parkland for future civic, cultural and/or commercial uses? **Teresa Isaac** *Lexington, KY* The City is redeveloping a large parcel of public housing near its downtown under a master plan calling for demolition of dilapidated buildings and the addition of new housing, a public school and new parkland. How can the design of this area successfully integrate the adjacent neighborhoods and create a school that serves as the center of the community?

Making Better Places:
Ten City Design Resolutions

By Jeff Speck, Director of Design, National Endowment for the Arts

America's cities are changing every day. Some are becoming better places to live, some worse. Cities improve or worsen as a result of many intersecting forces, but if any one person has the ability to lead this change – or at least exert an influence – it is the American mayor.

One of the best unheralded programs of the National Endowment for the Arts is the Mayors' Institute on City Design. For almost 20 years, this group has been putting mayors together with designers to rethink the shape of their cities. After 18 months working with this program, a number of design truisms that I once understood mostly in theory have become painfully obvious in practice. That many of these items are common sense does not alter the fact that mayors every day make decisions large and small that violate them outright. So, for all the mayors today who want to make better places, and for the citizens who want to help, I offer the following 10 City Design Resolutions. Those who wish to call them commandments are welcome to do so.

1 Design streets for people.

What attracts people to cities? For most, it is the public realm with the vibrant street life that phrase implies. A successful public realm is one that people can inhabit comfortably on foot. Unfortunately, most cities today still allow their streets to be designed by traffic engineers who ignore the real needs of pedestrians. For example, parallel parking, essential to protecting people on the sidewalk, is often eliminated to speed the traffic. Every aspect of the streetscape, including lane widths, curbs, sidewalks, trees and lighting can be designed to the needs of either cars or people. Too many cities favor the former.

2 Beware of specialists.

Engineers are not alone in their quest to shape the city around specialized needs. The modern world is full of experts who are paid to ignore criteria beyond their profession. But the specialist is the enemy of the city, which is by definition a general enterprise. The school and parks departments will push for fewer, larger facilities, since these are easier to maintain. The public works department will insist that new neighborhoods be designed principally around snow and trash removal. The department of transportation will build new roads to ease traffic generated by the very sprawl that they cause. Each of these approaches may be correct in a vacuum but is wrong in a city. Cities need generalists like mayors to weigh the advice of specialists against the common good.

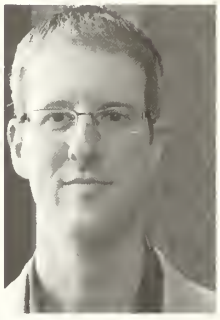


Photo: Yoko Inoue

Jeff Speck

3 Make the city 24-hour.

Another key to active street life is creating a 24-hour city, with neighborhoods so diverse in use that they are occupied around the clock. Eating, shopping, working and socializing – these activities are mutually reinforcing and flourish in each other's presence. Moreover, many businesses such as restaurants and health clubs rely on both daytime and evening traffic to cover their rent. When considering the future of any city district, the first step should be to ask what uses are missing. In many downtowns, the answer to that question is housing, and cities from Providence to San Diego can point to new housing as a big part of a recent turnaround. In *Up from Zero*, Paul Goldberger is dead-on in bemoaning the main error of the World Trade Center planning process and its failure to introduce any housing into those 16 commercial acres.

Photo: Dan Burden

4 Make it safe to walk.

If they are to keep walking, pedestrians must feel safe, comfortable and entertained. And nothing is more boring than a parking lot. Whether they are open-air or six-stories tall, parking lots must be banished along any street that hopes to attract walking. Happily, parking lots are easy to hide. It only takes a 20-foot-thick crust of housing or offices to block a huge lot from view, and new parking structures can easily be built atop ground-level shops. Smart cities across the country are putting these requirements into law. Is yours?

5 Keep it small.

People are small, and the most walkable cities acknowledge this fact with small blocks, small streets, small buildings and small increments of investment. Portland owes much of its success to its tiny blocks that create an incredibly porous network of streets, each of which can be quite small as

Photo: Dan Burden

a result. Whether for the mega-block housing schemes of the Sixties or the cul-de-sac craze of the Eighties, most cities that closed streets in the past now wish they hadn't. Building height is another place for smallness. Only in the densest cities where land doesn't sit empty as parking lots are tall buildings justified. Otherwise, allowing skyscrapers just causes a few lucky sites to become overbuilt while their neighhors all lay fallow under massive speculation. Limiting building heights is also a useful bargaining chip: only with a height limit in place can height bonuses then be offered as an incentive for other concessions. Finally, a healthy real estate development community is one of chipmunks, not gorillas. Do not tie the fate of your city to a single corporate juggernaut with its silver-bullet megamall when you should instead be leading the way for the local investor who wants to renovate a rowhouse.

How many buildings do we need to tear down before we learn our lesson? Almost every city that deeply regrets the 1960s destruction of its 1900s structures is happily permitting the 2000s destruction of 1940s structures. Need the march of time only confirm our current ignorance? Historic preservation may be our best way to respect our ancestors, but it is justified on economic terms alone. Don Rypkema reminds us that in market economies it is the differentiated product that commands a monetary premium. This is why cities like Savannah and Miami Beach can point to historic preservation as the key ingredient in recent booms. It isn't always easy to find a productive use for an empty old building, but tearing it down makes that outcome impossible. In these cases, remember the old adage: "Don't do something; just stand there!"

Affordable housing remains a crisis in most cities,

Photo: Dan Burden

but the solution is not to build more housing projects. Rather, to be successful, affordable housing must do two things: be integrated with market rate housing and look like market rate housing. The most effective affordability programs combine housing with preservation by building city-owned houses on "missing tooth" empty lots in struggling historic neighborhoods. These houses provide smaller-than-standard apartments, but they are stylistically compatible with their neighbors. Despite the best-intentioned efforts of three generations of architecture students, affordable housing is exactly the wrong place to pioneer new design styles. Experiment on the rich; they can always move out.

People have been talking about sustainable architecture for decades, but that movement has finally hit the tipping point with the advent of the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED standards. There is no longer any excuse for not building green. LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, and the standards allow a building to become certified as sustainable in terms of its resource use and interior health. It costs a little bit more to build green, but these costs are made up quickly in energy savings and worker productivity. Chicago and Seattle are two of many cities that now require all municipal buildings be LEED certified. Does yours? Oh, and while we're on the subject of green: Plant more trees! If mayors understood the correlation between tree cover and real estate value, our cities would look like forests.

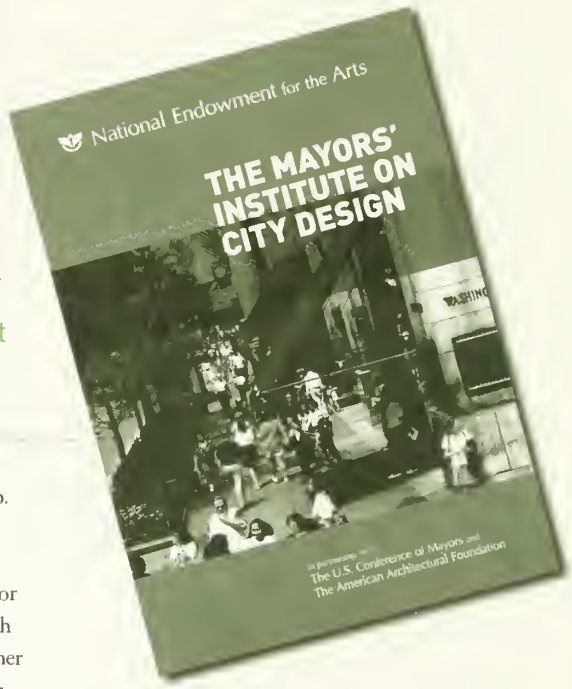
A "dingbat" is an apartment house on stilts floating above an exposed parking lot. The construction of one dinghat on a street of elegant rowhouses is enough to send property values plummeting. Why, then, do most city codes make no distinction between rowhouses and dingbats? Conventional zoning codes, made up of incomprehensible statistics like floor area ratios, ignore the differences between pleasant and unbearable urbanism. More often than not, they also make a city's traditional urban form – short front setbacks and mixed uses – illegal to emulate. For these reasons, a new generation of design ordinances is gaining favor among planners. Called form-based codes, these ordinances regulate what really matters: a building's height, disposition, location and where it puts the parking. These codes actually have pictures in them – imagine! Cities including Arlington, Virginia, and Miami are creating form-based codes for key neighborhoods. Governor Schwarzenegger just signed a bill encouraging form-based codes in California. What does the Arnold know that your city doesn't?

Charleston Mayor Joe Riley reminds us that cities should be places that make the heart sing. For many of our citizens, especially those too poor or infirm to travel, the city is an entire world. For this reason, it is our responsibility to create and maintain cities that not only function properly but also afford moments of beauty. Yet how many communities today routinely award to the lowest hidder their contracts for schools, parks, and governinent buildings, the only investments that belong to us all? In the interest of short-term parsimony, we cheat ourselves out of an honorable public realm and a noble legacy. This did not used to be the case, and it need not continue. Many of the nation's most heautiful buildings and parks were built during periods of unparalleled adversity. It should not take another depression to make civic structures lovely again.

Cities are the largest and most complex things that we humans make. Despite evidence to the contrary, the knowledge exists on how to make them well. To the mayors – and citizens – who want to create better places: please start here.

Photo: Aaron Koch

New Booklet Spotlights Institute's Broad Impact


National Endowment for the Arts
THE MAYORS' INSTITUTE ON CITY DESIGN
The U.S. Conference of Mayors
The American Architectural Foundation

"The Mayors' Institute on City Design is so powerful. It brings together mayors with designers who help them implement their vision for their cities in the best possible way."

The National Endowment for the Arts and American Architectural Foundation have unveiled a free 22-page booklet spotlighting the Mayors' Institute on City Design, which NEA calls one of its signature programs.

The booklet dramatizes the impact of the Mayors' Institute by listing the 625 mayors who graduated from the program since its creation in 1986 and marks their cities on a U.S. map. All 50 states and Puerto Rico have dots marking participating mayors and host universities.

"Of all the programs by the NEA, it is hard to imagine one that has done more tangible public good than the Mayors' Institute on City Design," said NEA Chairman Dana Gioia. "Even a short list of this program's many accomplishments demonstrates the positive leadership and informed counsel it has provided to communities across the nation."

In the booklet, Metro Louisville Mayor Jerry Abramson's waterfront park is showcased, and a number of mayors endorsed the value of the Mayors' Institute, including Minneapolis Mayor R. T. Rybak, Anaheim Mayor Curt Pringle, Hartford Mayor Eddie Perez, U.S. Senator and former St. Paul Mayor Norm Coleman, U.S. Rep. and former Macon, GA, Mayor Jim Marshall, U.S. Rep. and former Charlotte Mayor Sue Myrick, Columbus, OH, Mayor Michael Coleman, Tennessee Governor and former Nashville Mayor Phil Bredesen, U.S. Rep. and former Fort Worth Mayor Kay Granger, Nebraska Governor and former Lincoln Mayor Mike Johanns, Rochester Mayor William Johnson and Miami Mayor Manuel Diaz.

U.S. Conference of Mayors Executive Director Thomas Cochran said: "The Mayors' Institute on City Design is so powerful. It brings together mayors with designers who help them implement their vision for their cities in the best possible way." Jeff Speck, director of design for NEA, added, "The energizing effect of bringing mayors and designers together in an intimate setting, apart from the day-to-day concerns of running a city, was immediately evident."

In addition to the 625 mayors, more than 400 design professionals have participated in Institutes. Their interaction sparks ideas and instills a greater appreciation for the power of design among mayors, while the designers are educated on the needs of cities. In the creative environment of Mayors' Institute, urban projects are refined, and new ideas born.

"We are preparing for an era in which design will be at the top of the agenda for cities that want to compete and succeed. These are dynamic, innovative times which only elevate the need for the Institute," said Ron Bogle, president and CEO of the American Architectural Foundation.

The Mayors' Institute on City Design, recognized in 2000 with a Presidential Award for Design Excellence, began when Charleston, SC, Mayor Joseph R. Riley approached NEA about sponsoring a program recognizing that the mayors are cities' chief urban designers. The program now sponsors six Institutes a year.

"A mayor who understands design – the issues of scale, diversity, public spaces and livability – is a mayor shaping a city that will succeed," said Mayors' Institute Vice President Aaron Koch.

For a downloadable copy of the booklet, go to the NEA Website at www.arts.gov and look under the Publications section.

NEA Sets Deadlines For Design Grants

The National Endowment for the Arts invites cities to apply for grants in design stewardship.

Stewardship applications are due by August 15, and support begins no earlier than July 1, 2006. Stewardship refers to projects that protect, share or celebrate our collective design heritage, including historic preservation activities, exhibition and publication of the design of the past, education and outreach for established design practices in communities and gatherings to promote the heritage and conservation of design.

Communities considering applying for an NEA grant in design should speak with Design Specialist Susan Begley at 202-682-5796.

Alexander Garvin Explains Mayor's Role In the Art of Creating Change

"The point is that we know what works and what doesn't, and we should demand only those projects that are financially, entrepreneurially and politically feasible."

Alexander Garvin

Speaking at a recent Mayors' Institute on City Design in Charleston, national planning and real estate expert Alexander Garvin called for successful planning, not just successful projects.

Garvin, author of *The American City: What Works, What Doesn't*, explained mayors' roles as the "art of creating change." He said there is the erroneous belief that project success equals planning success, using the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. as an example. "It's separated from the rest of the city by too much space and if there is a spillover, it's at the Watergate – not exactly what would benefit most of the residents. It's a great cultural center, but it's a project success, not a planning success."

Projects that call on the public to get in their cars, drive into a parking lot below the building, attend the show, get back in their cars and drive away may leave the city not only unaffected, but in greater trouble, he said.

In a provocative slide presentation, Garvin demonstrated the power of the Mayors' Institute to open new lines of thinking. He showed slides of projects and plans to back up his argument that too often a city is not rebuilt, but looted.

"Cultural centers that are unable to support a good bookstore, civic centers that are avoided by every one but bums, commercial centers that are lackluster imitations of standardized suburban chain stores, shopping promenades that go from no place to nowhere and have no promenaders, expressways that eviscerate great cities. This is not the rebuilding of cities. This is the sacking of cities."

Pointing to the great planning in Daniel Burnham's plan for 23 miles along Lake Michigan's shore, Charleston's first historic preservation legislation and the Willamette River shore land in Portland that became a park, he said these are "triumphs" that mayors can learn from. However, he warned that while lessons can be learned, mayors must remember that every city is different, and in fact, every part of each city is different so plans must respond to local realities and local character.

One commonality for cities is that "single function agencies" are a problem for cities because they "are allowed to proceed without any concern for anything around them, highways being the best example." "We no longer can just proceed with projects that are independent of their surroundings," he said.

"My new standard would be: 'can it be implemented,' 'will it generate a private market reaction', and 'is it worth it?'" He said a powerful example of a project that is worth it was Dock Street Produce in Philadelphia where plans to level the market were discarded, Rittenhouse Square was protected, and over a 50-year period, property values went up 18 times.

"The point is that we know what works and what doesn't, and we should demand only those projects that are financially, entrepreneurially and politically feasible," he concluded. "The only public actions we should take are actions that do more than create a successful project but that also generate a private market reaction that is sustained and desirable."

"Planning, in my opinion, is public action that generates or stimulates a widespread and sustained private market reaction," he said. "There are three ways that government can do that: through strategic public investments, through regulation and through incentives. That's good planning."

National experts like Garvin participate in each Mayors' Institute on City Design, where two and a half days are dedicated to mayors presenting design issues facing their cities and architects, planners and other authorities suggesting solutions. The Institute stimulates lively debates, opens new perspectives and generates creative ideas that have shaped major projects in cities across the U.S.

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